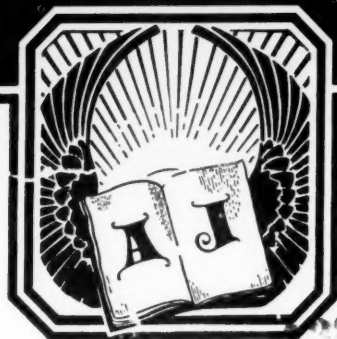


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PUSH THAT YARN OVER

Robert E. Mahaffay

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NOW FOR REDUCED MANUSCRIPT POSTAGE

Several readers have suggested that the present is a favorable time to crusade for reduced postage rates on manuscripts. They point to the recent executive order reducing the postage on books to 1½ cents per pound as evidence of a trend which should be followed up.

The Canadian manuscript rate is 1 cent for two ounces. This means that where a Canadian writer may submit his manuscript for 1 cent the United States writer would pay 6 cents. On a ten-ounce manuscript the Canadian writer would pay 5 cents postage each way, his United States cousin pays 30 cents.

The best way to secure more favorable legislation is for writers everywhere to write to their senators, representatives, to Postmaster General James A. Farley, and to other law-making executives at Washington, urging the justice of postage reduction on manuscripts which are submitted to or returned from magazines. This action has been taken by a number of correspondents who asked THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST to bring the subject before readers, and it is reliably reported that a number of legislators have taken the matter up with the postmaster general.

□ □ □ □

MORE ON SIGNIFICANCE

Dear Mr. Hawkins:

Sewell Peaslee Wright, in his article "Significance is a Key," has hit upon a point which is always actively raised at every meeting of that group of pulp-paper authors known as "The Milwaukee Fictioneers." It is the favorite shibboleth of one of our most distinguished members, Prof. Bernard Wirth, who teaches short-story writing at Marquette University.

Permit me to tie up the loose ends of Mr. Wright's article.

Significance has two phases.

First, it is the answer to "So what?" as applied to the story as a whole. It is the amplification of the Gay Ninety idea that every story must have a moral. Nowadays every story must have a *raison d'être*.

Secondly, every paragraph, sentence, clause and even word, must contribute to the main significance. There must be no minor episode, no bit of characterization, which is not strictly relevant to the plot. This phase is what Barrett Wendell at Harvard used to call "unity."

So "significance" answers two separate and successive questions: (1) what is the point to the story; and (2) does the story contain anything irrelevant to the making of that point?

RALPH MILNE FARLEY

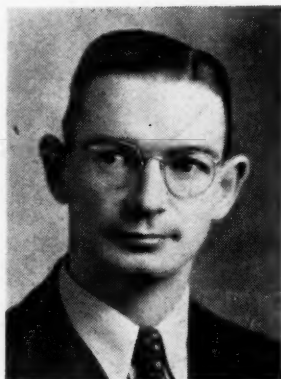
THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

VOL. XXIV. NO. 2

FEBRUARY
1939

PUSH THAT YARN OVER

... By ROBERT E. MAHAFFAY



Robert E. Mahaffay

PERHAPS nothing gives a writer more deliciously torturing pleasure than to open a magazine he is trying to hit and discover a louse. "What junk!" "And they turn my stuff down!" "Why in Sam Hill did that idiot editor—?"

Well, the editor may have liked it or, more probably,

it's by a lad who gives him top stuff nine-tenths of the time, or he could buy it cheaply at a time when he badly needed a yarn of its length and general description.

It's good fun, whatever the reason. It's part of the game to blast the editor and his warped sense of story distinction.

Another part of the game, which I overlooked for a long time, is a little more work. If a magazine is worth trying to hit, it probably contains stories that can teach you something. It is sometimes a good idea to work the gall out of your system on the ringers and then go to work on those others. Look for the yarn that the other lad wrote when he was at a peak.

If you write along day after day you understand what I mean by a peak. You don't know how you do it or why, and the thing comes when it damned well pleases. You tackle a plot that seems O.K. It develops unexpected strength; through some mysterious alchemy the characters become vivid and profound instead

In the little introductory note which we ran in connection with the last article of Bob Mahaffay's published in these pages ("Cowboys on Greek Vases," February, 1939) we came in for some gentle kidding because we stated that he "wrote for twenty-five years without a nibble." It was all due to misreading some phrase in his accompanying letter. Although Bob Mahaffay hasn't been writing for all of that twenty-five years, he has been going strong for some six years past—hitting the best Western books at their top-notch rates, particularly those issued by Popular Publications.

of routine; with the flow of the thing in your blood you toss in strips of description and canny dialogue at which you look back and wonder.

That's the yarn to hunt for.

It doesn't matter what field you happen to be working in. Most of my stuff is Western, so I'll draw examples from the "classical" Western library accumulating on my shelves. That "classical" term may be confusing. By it I mean to describe those yarns, pulp or otherwise, that real merit pushed over the top. Yarns that can teach me angles and tricks of the trade.

In the *West* of October, 1933, Ray Nafziger had a novel called, "Don't Crowd a Wolf." A swell title, to begin with. It deals with a mountain freighting line and a tough tangle which is unraveled by an engaging hardcase named McGillivray. An action yarn with no sobs, but a slick job. Half a dozen magazines would fall over themselves to buy it today.

Stannard, the superintendent, is going over the ticklish problems confronting them.

... McGillivray waved a big hand. "Aw, cut it short," he said. "Lemme keep from cryin' until I'm actually wadin' in all that grief. You sure got a collection of pictures," he went on, looking at the office walls which were literally covered with oil paintings. "That's a hell of a one for a freight and stag line to own," he continued, nodding at a painting which portrayed a stagecoach and six descending a mountain grade. "Look at the front legs on them leaders. No more action than you'd see in a dead Apache."

"That happens to have been painted by a famous artist, Collingwood," said Stannard. "... Collingwood came West and studied horses and Indians for years."

"Yeah? Well, he wasted his time. Look at that driver holdin' them reins like they was ribbons in a Maypole dance!" . . .

Arrived at the Whiskey Water stage station, McGillivray draws to the Scotch storekeeper:

. . . "Who's runnin' the hotel and restaurant—some grease-ball, fry-it-to-leather cook?"

"There's a Chink cookin' and a woman in charge

. . . A girl, a taffie-haired lassie with the most refined, lovely manners you ever saw."

"Just so her Chink can cook," said McGillivray, "she could be bald." . . .

Later, McGillivray tangles with a rival teamster, "Bigfoot" Billings, a fighter who, according to his own story, had manhandled John L. Sullivan. McGillivray takes him apart. Bigfoot sits up, bumps his head on the pump snout and swears.

. . . "I forgot to tell you a sayin' we got nailed up over the gate of Whiskey Water," said McGillivray. "A old sayin': 'Don't crowd a wolf. . ."

"Don't be crowdin' av a wolf," muttered Bigfoot. "Jasus, and ye brag on a lucky blow what a child could see was a accident. But for all of bein' a wasp-waisted telegraft pole, ye do pack a kick," he said with honest admiration. "The damndest Billy-be quick with y'r fists I ever cut sign on. It's too bad ye can't take it. If ye could, I'd try to make ye over into a fighter." . . .

Apart from the pace and quality of the yarn, there's a dialogue that packs color, character and punch.

I won't spoil space by reconstructing it in an inept way for the sake of comparison. We have all written or read blundering attempts to do the same thing. Examine what Nafziger has put into his.

That opening exchange with Stannard gives us McGillivray's breezily blunt character. Nothing is more sure fire, incidentally, than such an individual telling off a somewhat pompous boss. We get color in learning that McGillivray knows horses and stagecoaches.

Then that casual line: "Just so her Chink can cook, she could be bald." There's a neat way to begin a romance. Hardly to be condemned on the score that it's in the groove.

Two pages of description couldn't give us Bigfoot Billings more clearly than that speech of his. Reading it brings a grin. An editor drools when he runs into that kind of stuff.

Steward Edward White's collection of stories, "Arizona Nights," is rich in examples. "The Rawhide" is only one of them. You probably know the story. Buck Johnson rides into Arizona and the cattle business.

. . . And all about lay the desert shimmering, changing, many-tinted, wonderful, hemmed in by the mountains that seemed tenuous and thin, like beautiful mists and by the sky that seemed hard and polished like a turquoise." . . .

Senor Johnson marries, brings his wife, Estrella, to the desert. And after a time she runs

away with another man. Johnson pursues and overtakes them, subdues her lover.

. . . The girl had, during the struggle, gone through an aimless but frantic exhibition of terror. Now she shrank back, her eyes staring wildly, her hands behind her, ready to flop again over the brink of hysteria.

"What are you going to do?" she demanded, her voice unnatural.

She received no reply. The man reached out and took her by the arm.

And then at once, as though the personal contact of the touch had broken through the last crumb of numbness with which shock had overlaid Buck Johnson's passions, the insanity of his rage broke out . . . The tempest had broken in Buck Johnson's soul. When he had touched Estrella he had, for the first time, realized what he had lost. It was not the woman—her he despised. But the dreams! All at once he knew what they had been to him—he understood how completely the very substance of his life had changed in response to their slow soul-action. . . .

He binds the girl and her lover together in the green hide of a freshly-killed steer. The hide will shrink in the sun, crush them to death.

Then, riding away, Johnson reads his wife's letter of explanation to him. It is the desert, which he loves, which drove her to the deed. He looks about him, sees the desert for the first time as it must have appeared to his wife.

. . . Mile after mile it swept away before him, hot, dry, suffocating, lifeless. The sparse vegetation was grey with the alkali dust. The heat hung choking in the air like a curtain. Lizards sprawled in the sun, repulsive. The dried carcass of a steer, whose parchment skin drew tight across its bones, rattled in the breeze. Here and there rock ridges showed with the obscenity of so many skeletons, exposing to the hard, cruel sky the earth's nakedness. Thirst, delirium, death, hovered palpable in the wind; dreadful, unconquerable, ghastly. . . .

With that new and horrible picture in his mind, Buck Johnson goes back and cuts the two loose.

Socko writing? You can bet on it.

Steward Edward White had a ticklish and difficult job to do. He first had to make us see and feel that desert from Buck Johnson's point of view. Then he had to create in the reader's mind an understanding of the terrific emotional force which would drive a man to such a means of revenge. And when it was done he had to reverse himself, convincingly, by giving a picture of the desert as it existed for the girl.

Perhaps nothing kicks a yarn back faster than shallow motivation. The most dramatic scene in the world can appear lifeless or forged if the reader isn't made to feel the forces that urge on the characters involved.

When a scene reaches out and hits you between the eyes, the writer has probed down into the springs of emotion. We call it putting strength or punch or guts into writing. The writer is only making full use of forces inherent in his situation. He studies it, works over it, "feels" for it, until he gets it.

A discussion of action stories would hardly be complete if it didn't touch on fighting. One of the most famous fights, and to my notion the best of the lot, is the fight at Calabasas Inn in Frank H. Spearman's "Nan of Music Mountain."

The hero, Henry de Spain, is cornered in a saloon by four killers, Sandusky, Logan, Morgan and Sassoon. Four to one odds, and each of the four an exceedingly dangerous man. De Spain, though badly wounded doing it, kills two, disables the others and escapes.

A next-to-impossible, feat, on the face of it. You and I might handle it in such a way as to wring from a disgusted editor the comment: "A miracle! If you can sand them, you don't need to write stories."

Spearman gets away with it, and does it superbly and convincingly. How! Granting comparatively equal gun skill, the two elements influencing a fight are position and character. During what Spearman calls the "preliminary gabble of a fight," both of those elements are built up with a watchmaker's care. Spearman spends better than a thousand words at it.

Don't feel that the "preliminary gabble" is dragged in by the horns for that purpose or that it wouldn't have occurred. The four killers are too wise simply to walk in and start shooting. Killing de Spain is a hazardous business, and they know it. In the interests of self-preservation, they want the best possible break before going into action.

De Spain, his mind desperately recing, plays the angles of position and character to the hilt. We follow him as he jockeys for the position which is least perilous. We follow him as he frames a vivid picture of what each of the four men opposing him is apt to do.

By the time the fight breaks we are ready for it. We know the room thoroughly, we know exactly where each man is standing and why he is there, we know the pitch of emotion to which each man has been raised.

Not until then does Spearman whip into his action. A question is asked and not answered.

... For de Spain asked it only to cover the spring he made at that instant into Sandusky's middle. Cat-like though he was, the feint did not take the big fellow unprepared. He had heard once, when or where he could not tell, but he had never forgotten the hint, that de Spain, a boxer, was as quick with his feet as with his hands. The outlaw whirled. Both men shot from the hip; the reports cracked

together. One bullet, grazing the fancy button, smashed through the gaudy waistcoat; the other, as de Spain's free hand struck at the muzzle of the big man's gun, tore into de Spain's foot. Sandusky, convulsed by the frightful shock, staggered against de Spain's arm, the latter dancing tight against him. Logan, alive to the trick but caught behind his partner, fired over Sandusky's right shoulder at de Spain's head, flattened side wise against the gasping outlaw's breast. Hugging his shield, de Spain threw his second shot over Sandusky's left shoulder into Logan's face. Logan, sinking to the floor, never moved again. Supporting with extraordinary strength the unwieldy bulk of the dying Sandusky, de Spain managed to steady him as a buffer against Morgan's fire until he could send a slug over Sandusky's head at the instant the latter collapsed. Morgan fell against the bar.

Sandusky's weight dragged de Spain down. For an instant the four men sprawled in a heap. Sassoon, who had not yet got an effective shot across at his agile enemy, dropping his revolver, dodged under the rail to close. De Spain, struggling to free himself from the dying man, saw, through a mist, the greenish eyes and the thirsty knife. He fired from the floor. . .

He hits Sassoon but doesn't stop him. Then, managing to free himself of Sandusky's weight, he clubs Sassoon senseless with his empty gun.

That isn't, to my notion, a routine fight in which the hero says abruptly, "You're all through, mister!" bangs away wildly and then wades through blood to the door with his shoulders back.

Not every fight can be as long or as thoroughly prepared for as this one, but no fight should be less well considered.

The use of a gun, even in the heyday of the western period, wasn't as casual a matter as the striking of a match. As a general rule, men valued their lives sufficiently to take no more chances with them than they had to. And a lot of emotional force, on both sides, went into a fight.

Again, when that is achieved, you have a quality that pushes a yarn over with the editors. It's convincing, it's human, and you have a sale.

So, winding the matter up, it's that little extra effort, that "touch"—whether in dialogue, description or action—that shoves a yarn over the goal line. It's part of the game. The professionals have learned it, and we can pick up the trick from them.

Flog the misfits when you run across them, sure, but weed out as well the bits that can teach you something about getting what you want to say down on paper.

BEGINNER'S LUCK

By GAIL EATON

Then there's the story
Of the beginning hack
Who sent in one story
And got five back!

||| A WRITER'S TWO MINDS

. . . By CHARLES F. RONAYNE

Mr. Ronayne is a New York author's agent and critic.

ARNOLD BENNETT has a story somewhere in which the chief character is represented as having several minds. One mind functioned on one plane and dealt with certain matters of business. Another mind could be working at the same time on domestic matters. A third mind could be tabulating the characteristics of the person the man was talking to at the moment, and so on. Well, that's not quite as silly as you might be inclined to suppose. As a matter of fact, the creative writer must have two minds, and each of them must be working on all cylinders as soon as he sits down at his typewriter.

Let's call the first mind the imaginative ego. This is the mind that imagines the story, constructs the characters, makes them talk a certain dialogue, pulls the strings that cause them to go through certain actions. I have been told that in the writer this is primarily done in the subconscious. I wouldn't know. All that I do know is that in this creative business the writer is boss of the entire show. He can imagine his characters into all sorts of situations and can think of any numbers of ways to get them into and out of a jam.

Let it be noticed here that this kind of mental activity is not peculiar to writers. Everybody, whether he is a writer or not, can imagine. Everybody can think up situations. Everybody can wonder what would happen if Jones robbed a bank, ran away with his best friend's wife, murdered his stenographer, or shot the Fuller's Brush man. The only thing that marks off the writer from other men in this respect is that he deliberately trains his imagination, teaches it to function along certain lines, keeps it within bounds, and uses it as a stage whereon he produces and studies certain dramatic situations.

The second mind in the writer's mental furniture is the reportorial mind. The writer not only imagines things. He also reports things. For example, in his imagination he sees two people in a conflict, three people under stress of emotion, four people in a hell of a jam, and he carefully reports on a sheet in the typewriter just what he sees and hears and notices as those people resolve their difficulties and come out of the jam.

This distinction between the writer's two minds is no mere theory. It is of supreme im-

portance in learning the job of how to write stories. Examine any published story you like, analyze any successful writer's script, read carefully any long or short or even short-short in the current magazines, and you'll inevitably find that what the writer is striving to do in every instance is to perform a job of reporting. He has seen something on the screen of his imagination and is trying to reproduce that something as faithfully as possible by means of the printed word.

Whether this job of reporting is harder than the job of imagining depends on the individual writer. Some writers find it easy to imagine and hard to report. Others find the job of imagining a hateful chore. Give this latter group an imaginative build-up and they find the reporting relatively easy. But whichever of these two jobs is easy or hard, both of them must be done by the writer who wants to see his stuff in print. Several years of coaching the young writer have convinced me that the task of breaking into the writing game could be made easier for many people if this slant on technique were hammered into the aspirant's brain from the start. The writer is first a person who imagines, and then a person who reports.

He imagines things about people. People strut and fret their hour upon the stage of his thought. People are characters in the drama unfolded on the screen of his imagination. The reports he makes about those dramas must necessarily be reports about people. Therefore, when he sits down to write his story he must write about people. And he must introduce his people to the reader right at the opening of his yarn.

His main thought when he sits at the machine is not about what is this story going to be but about whom it is going to be. It has to be that way, because what he has seen in his imagination is some *person* getting out of a difficulty. The person in the difficulty is his first concern. The difficulty is secondary. Well, you say, if that is true, why not mention the person in the first line and describe him in the first paragraph? Sure, that is precisely what many successful writers do. Would you think it exaggerated to present the person first, say, in this form?

Mr. Smith was pleased with the Black Swan.
He was pleased with Kirsthall Green.

That's just how a story by Eric Knight recently opened in the *Satevepost*. And of course that method of opening is the tip-off that the story is going to be about Mr. Smith. In the same issue of the *Post* the opening line of another story is this:

This is Nancy Garver calling from the Horn Spoon Antique Shop.

There you have it. Name your character, or describe him or her, as soon as you can. That tells the reader about whom the story is going to be.

Far more important than the naming of your main character is the description of him. The description is absolutely essential to the story. The reader, if he is to follow the story at all, must be enabled to see the character on the printed page as photographically as the writer sees him on the screen of imagination. Description may be one of two kinds, and is usually a combination of both: physical or mental. Here are several examples of straight presentation of the physical description:

(1) Maidie waited under the clock at the terminus. She wore a brown coat and hat, a blue dress with pink flowers on it, sunburn stockings and shiny black shoes. (From a recent story in *Pall Mall*, an English magazine.)

(2) He was a clear-faced blond fellow built as trimly as an oarsman, and now, bare and brown to the waist, in soiled sneakers and flannel trousers that appeared to have been run over by a circus parade, he was stepping lightly about the dusty room of his warehouse, his right hand wrapped around the horn of his anvil, his thoughts wrapped around his problem. (From a story in *Woman's Home Companion*, August, 1937.)

(3) I used to think he was pretty good-looking, but I was wrong there. It was just that he looked friendly. He had wavy black hair and a nose that waved too. My grandmother told me about that nose. When Joe was about sixteen some kid had banged him in the face with an iron pipe. When they had it patched up, his nose made a regular s-curve down his face. When he laughed it wrinkled and twisted and he was always laughing. ("Joe Beans" in a recent issue of *Scribner's*.)

(4) She was not a very lovely woman. A plump body she had, and blue-black oily curls swinging free around the white neck. But her eyes glittered. The mouth smiled distantly, ironically. Every movement of the little feet traveled upwards through her whole body. Even the flower behind her ear was alive. (A dancer in a recent *Atlantic Monthly* story.)

An outstanding example of this technique of portraiture is to be found in the opening words of "Gone with the Wind." On her very first page Margaret Mitchell takes very good care that the reader gets a picture of Scarlett O'Hara. Read any of Arnold Bennett's stories and you'll see the careful use of the same technique.

To depict directly the mentality of your main character is more difficult than to portray his physical appearance. It is not a job to be rashly



"Dear . . . that manuscript of your new book . . . was it important?"

tackled by the young writer, because it is not usually possible to do mentality-portraiture in one or two sentences. For example, suppose that I want to present a character who has the organizing sort of mind. I must show him not only organizing things objectively but also thinking his plans for organizing, feeling fretted and annoyed whenever he is confronted with chaos, docketing things in his mind, reacting to every event in a definitely mathematical sort of way, and having the sensation of happiness and contentment only when he manages to put things in order. This kind of thing usually stretches over the entire length of the story.

First-person narratives offer the clearest illustrations of this method of subjective portraiture. In the main the character is free to live and move and act within the realm of his own consciousness. But there are examples to be found apart from the first-person story. One such example, too long to quote here, is the story "The Good Wife" in the January, 1938, issue of *The American Mercury*.

Character studies depend for much of their interest on this kind of portraiture. The author of such a study has trained the reader to see into the character's mind and to know just how that character is going to act. Don't you know just how terribly anxious Hymie Kaplan is going to be when he tries to speak English, how circumspectly Mr. Tutt is going to try a case in court, how selfishly Scarlett O'Hara is going to react to the challenge of circumstance, how coldly and methodically Philo Vance attacks a

crime problem, and how the George Spelvin of the columnists is going to behave in any ordinary happening? The reason for your fairly accurate knowledge of the reactions of each of these characters is that their several creators have subtly built up for you a picture of their mentalities. They succeed in doing this because they have lived and thought with those characters and because they have listened to them speak their lines in the theatre of their imagination.

As an illustration of this approach to the job of telling a story, here is Phyllis Bentley speaking through one Marion Phipps in a *Woman's Home Companion* story, "The Missing Character."

Miss Marian Phipps, the novelist, was busy with a problem of characterization which had held up her work for the past three weeks. It concerned the heroine of her new novel, who was just about to emerge from her brain onto the written page. The girl had stuck on the threshold so long because Miss Phipps was utterly unable to decide her appearance.

In other words, the story cannot emerge onto the writer's page as long as the character remains stuck in the threshold of the author's imagination. When the character comes out on the stage of the author's mind, it is merely a step from there on to the paper in the type-writer.

Now, let me sell you another helpful idea about your job of writing a short-story. A story is about people and the difficulties in which they find themselves. But the inner soul of the story is almost always about one person only. It is either about the boy's difficulties of winning the girl or the girl's difficulties of winning the boy. It is either primarily about the boy or primarily about the girl. It follows from this that the simplest way to tell a story is to restrict all the purely subjective elements to one character. Don't try to get inside the minds of half a dozen of your characters. Restrict yourself to the treatment of one mind.

If you are fond of the game of analyzing stories and seeing what makes them tick, you will discover very soon that a writer almost invariably writes about the subjective states of one character only, of his main character. He tells what this character thinks. He usually avoids telling what the other characters think. The secondary characters are seen to do certain things that mess up the problem for the main character; it is not good technique to write about their inner states. Thousands of otherwise good stories are ruined by the tyro's ignorance of this little rule.

Please take note that I am not laying down a sacred rule for the writing of the short-story. I am merely telling you the results of years of analyzing stories, printed and otherwise. Sometimes the experienced short-story worker can get away with slight deviations from this rule. This is especially true of the natural short-story craftsman. Yet it seems to be fairly well established that the subjective treatment is restricted to one character while all the other characters are exclusively objective. Nearly always, the inexperienced author balls up his story by ignorance of the rule.

How is this sort of thing done? The answer is: by approaching your story from the theatrical angle. See your character or characters act out the story on the stage of your mind. Listen to them deliver their lines. Watch them work out the situation. And then report what you see. If you can do this you will have solved many of the difficulties of story writing, things like delayed action, wrong characterization, faulty dialogue, improper background, and the rest. Try this theatrical approach. It will bring you results.

□ □ □ □

A VERSE WRITER TO A FREE-STYLE POET

By DORIS I. BATEMAN

To you
Who soar aloft,
I lift my eyes to see
One who scorns the staves of fences
Below.

Your song
Is heard clearly
By those who brave the clouds;
They, too, glory in your freedom
Of flight.

But I,
From my barnyard,
Watch you enviously,
And lay lowly, commercial eggs
To sell.

And see!
My muscled wings
Are still so tightly bound
They can lift me no higher than
My fence:

My notes
Are travesty.
Though I would outvie you,
Cinquaines!
Even now, hoarsely I cackle

FEATURE POSSIBILITIES —A CHECK LIST OF FIFTY

... By **ELEANOR F. BROWN**



Eleanor F. Brown

PERHAPS you've read about how others find and write newspaper features, and perhaps you've said to yourself, "Yes. That's all well and good if you live in a city, but I live in a small town. Nothing ever happens here."

You're mistaken in thinking that,

and here's the proof. As a first step ask yourself these three questions and answer them honestly:

1. Have you average or better-than-average intelligence?
2. Have you enough ability in handling words to be able to put together clear, understandable English with an occasional bit of vivid description and emotional appeal?
3. Do you have a fairly good imagination? And a fair sense of the dramatic?

If the answer is yes to the first two, you can cultivate the last, and you can *find* and write newspaper features no matter where you live or what you do. There are probably a half dozen nice, juicy reporterless features running around right under your nose begging to be written. And if you write them to the tune of \$5. to \$10 apiece, you'll get the habit and keep right on writing them.

People who sit around and say, "Oh yes, it's a nice way to make money if you can do it," irritate me. You don't have to be a literary genius, and you don't have to have a big name to sell features. I know because I've been selling them steadily for the past 12 years to everything from city dailies and Sunday magazine sections to N.E.A. and Science Service. For the past year I lived in a tiny town in the middle of the Nevada desert, a town numbering no more than 300 or 400 souls, a hundred dogs, and a few chickens, yet every month I've managed to rake up, write, and sell to the Reno,

Miss Brown has been regular correspondent for the Spokane Chronicle, Tacoma News-Tribune, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Science Service, and Associated Press, and has had material in more than a hundred newspapers, as well as Popular Science Monthly, Popular Mechanics, Journal of Home Economics, and other periodicals. She holds degrees from Washington State College and Syracuse University, and is now working on a doctorate at the University of Texas, where she holds an advanced fellowship.

Nevada, *Evening Gazette* two or three long features with pictures that were good enough to gain me a by-line on four out of every five stories. I started here just as I have in other places where I wanted to free-lance—by having a good story in mind and querying the editor of the *Gazette* on it, giving him a brief outline of my publicity and newspaper experience. He responded with the order to go ahead on the suggested story and gave me a lead on another. There was a regular news correspondent in the town, but that didn't mean that special features from other sources would not be acceptable.

This is a town with a colorful history of early gold-rush days, a "ghost" town of many memories, and in these nine months I've made the ghost give up most of the memories in question. Pioneer miners who have interesting life stories have provided material for several character sketches, a dog team used as a city garbage disposal system, a lone Chinaman who lives in the old Joss house and is all that remains of a once flourishing Chinatown; an old French clock in the local bank, little valued but recently appraised by a visiting jeweler as worth more than \$1000, a miniature school-house, the pupils of which are all from one family (have been for several years and will be for several years more)—all these provided stories, along with many other topics. Like the famous gold "in them thar hills" the material is far from exhausted, and every community from Maine to California, large or small, is a gold mine for feature material for the enterprising would-be-writer.

You say your community is different, that you just can't find definite subjects. Well, here is a list of possible topics for any community, the sort of thing that might happen anywhere. Read the list; check the possibilities for your locality; get out your paper, pencil and camera and go to it! Then, to make it more fun, print and develop your own pictures to speed things up and save expense. Remember, these are not spot news features we're talking about, but straight human interest features good almost any time. That doesn't mean to

overlook the spot news where a picture can be worked in. Far from it! You'll get more money for such stories naturally, but they don't happen often in a small place, and when they do you can hardly fail to recognize their news value. It's the other type—the kind of story that may be good at any time—that is most often overlooked. A few of these topics ought to be obvious when they occur; others may have to be dug out. Have pictures whenever possible.

50 TIPS

1. Unusual exploits of a dog or any pet in your community.
2. Picture and story of any freak animal born or owned in your community (3-legged hen, legless calf, etc.).
3. An unusual occupation for a person of either sex.
4. A girl or woman doing what is usually a man's job.
5. Story of a child prodigy of any sort.
6. Story of an interesting old building (possibly a landmark) which is being torn down.
7. Character sketch of any old person who has had an unusually colorful life.
8. Story of an interesting "ghost" town in a mining or lumbering district.
9. Discovery of any unusual thing in a community.
10. "Personality" sketch of any prominent individual, resident or visiting.
11. Story and pictures of some freak of nature in scenery or little known beauty spot.
12. Unusual costume or headgear worn to a fancy dress party.
13. Description or picture of any type of odd vehicle or very old vehicle.
14. Story of an unusually interesting hobby.
15. People who make money in ingenious ways.
16. Any interesting or odd new invention.
17. Any odd or unusual marriage situation.
18. "Peculiar" arrests. People who have other people arrested on trivial counts.
19. Unusual or interesting campaigns in a town for civic betterment or "clean-up."
20. Ingenious devices used by politicians to gain votes or publicity in local elections.
21. Odd causes of fires or other "freak" accidents.
22. Tallest and shortest man or woman in town, taken together as a contrast, or tallest and shortest students in a high school or college.
23. Good-looking girls, winners in contests or competitions for beauty or popularity, with short life sketch of each.
24. Life sketches of local people who travel widely. Account of a trip.
25. Odd requests received by any public worker or official such as Chamber of Commerce Secretary, telephone information operator, etc.
26. Unusual gifts received by anyone in your community for Christmas, birthdays or other occasions.
27. 100th birthdays of any old persons in the town.
28. Golden wedding anniversaries of persons fairly well known.
29. Formation of any unusual club or organization.
30. Historical features on the development of a community, diving back into town and county records from dramatic events. Could be linked up with the death of a pioneer or something of the kind.
31. Any odd or peculiar or even just plain new "fads" in community or school.
32. Passing (retirement or destruction) of any old boat or train.
33. Picture and story of anyone in your community who wins prizes in any contests, competitions, or fairs.
34. Stories on any special athletic accomplishments of any individual in school or community.
35. A story and picture of a play cast in costume.
36. Special feature treatment of any unusually clever social event given in your community.
37. Any unusual or disastrous Halloween pranks.
38. Afghan making as practiced in your community. Some women knit them as a constant hobby. Kodachrome pictures of afghans of unusual beauty of design and color might sell to magazines. Photo of champion afghan maker of the community.
39. Odd bequests made by persons dying (such as to animals, etc.).
40. Local persons who have made an unusual success in college or business. Winners of college fellowships or scholarships.
41. Life studies of insects, birds or animals in their own habitat, made with candid cameras and enlarged. Best in series.
42. Any unusual or particularly interesting courses offered in your local high school or college, night school, or adult classes, such as preparations for marriage, handicraft, etc.
43. Any unusual groups of people or religious sects, whose activities would make a good story. Examples are Doukhobors in Canada, Nudists, etc.
44. What is the main recreation of your community? Is it fox hunting, horse racing, horseshoe pitching, water sports, winter sports, polo, or what? Is it good for a story?
45. Are there any new industrial developments such as factories, mining, mills or machinery worth photographing and writing up?
46. Are there any cleverly planned or shaped business houses or roadhouses which might provide a story for a trade paper?
47. Are there any severely handicapped persons (deaf, dumb, blind, etc.) who have overcome that handicap and are making a success in spite of it?
48. Have there been any unusual recent hunting or fishing exploits worth a picture and story of the hunter or fisherman with his kill or catch?
49. Are there any interesting camps for children, nursery schools, or play activities of an organized nature in the community, worth a story?
50. Do your Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and similar organizations do things of sufficient interest occasionally to make a feature? Most of them do.

NEXT MONTH: The Annual Forecast Number of *The Author & Journalist*—a regular March event eagerly looked forward to by readers. As usual, the Forecast Number will carry authoritative articles on present literary trends by writers, editors and agents, important editorial announcements by leading magazines and magazine groups, and the quarterly Handy Market List.

THE TRUTH ABOUT JUVENILE MATERIAL

. . . By CHARLES R. ROSENBERG, JR.

Mr. Rosenberg is an attorney-at-law. He spent several years as promotion writer for the Curtis Publishing Co., and as a free-lance has sold all along the literary front, to slicks including *Saturday Evening Post* and *Esquire*, numerous trade journals, farm papers, religious magazines, and juveniles.

ARE you in a muddle about the juvenile field? Will Herman says there's real money to be made out of juvenile stuff—and proves it by his own performance.* Yet, if you have written a juvenile article of 1000 words, and sold it on the ninth trip for \$2.50, you may be inclined to take Will's assurances with a very large grain of salt.

I set out to give juvenile writing what I called a "fair trial." As a result, I have developed some facts and figures that may help the hard-working free lance to get a practical perspective on both the possibilities and the limitations of the juvenile field. I am thinking not of juvenile books but of stories and articles intended for the Sunday-school papers, which constitute at least ninety per cent of the juvenile market.

My "fair trial" consisted in the writing and marketing of 40,000 words of juvenile material. Most of this wordage was in editorials and short articles. There were only two fiction items. At present 11,000 words of this material are still in circulation and probably will be sold in due course. The other 29,000 words have been sold and paid for, and the results with this sold production are, I think, a fair indication of what the ordinary free-lance may expect in the juvenile field.

My gross receipts for these 29,000 words were \$175.00, or an average of \$6.03 per 1000 words. My total expenses were \$44.00, leaving me a net "take" of \$131.00 for my 29,000 words. This is an average of \$4.51 per 1000 words.

My expense item of \$44.00, or \$1.52 per 1000 words, will bear some explanation. I either dictated the material or wrote a rough draft which was afterwards copied by a stenographer. When a manuscript became soiled or mused looking after making several trips, I had a fresh copy typed by a stenographer. Thus, \$22.50 out of the \$44.00 expenses went for typing. Of course, if you do all your own typing, this part of the expense is eliminated. The remaining \$21.50 of the expenses went for paper, envelopes and postage. This is an average of 74c per 1000 words. Considering the prospective number of mailings of a juvenile

manuscript, I doubt whether this figure of 74c per 1000 words for stationery and postage could be materially reduced.

Assuming that you do all your own typing and that you average \$6.00 per 1000 words gross for your juvenile material, your net returns would be about \$5.25 per 1000 words.

My average of \$6.03 per 1000 words is perhaps a trifle high because I was fortunate enough to sell a fair proportion of my 29,000 words at one cent a word, which is ordinarily the highest rate paid in the juvenile market. Unless you hit the one-cent-a-word markets with reasonable frequency, your average results in the juvenile field are more likely to run around \$5.00 per 1000 words. Allowing for 75c postage and stationery expense, your net results would be about \$4.25 per thousand words.

Will Herman has already pointed out that satisfactory financial results in the juvenile field depend upon volume production. By arithmetic it's clear that if you can average 5000 words of salable juvenile material per day, your income, even at a net of \$4.25 per 1000 words, will be \$21.25 a day. If you work only 5 days a week, you will be earning somewhat better than \$100.00 a week.

This sounds like attractive arithmetic, but to me it has at least two serious objections. I doubt, first of all, whether the ordinary free-lance could maintain a production of 5000 words per day as a regular schedule, especially if he were obliged to give a reasonable proportion of his time to the research necessary for juvenile articles. Moreover, if a large number of free-lances were to start bombarding the juvenile publications with 5000 words per day, the percentage of sales for each writer would necessarily be small. The law of supply and demand applies here as in other forms of selling.

Yet it is not necessary to turn out such a tremendous production in order to write profitably for the juvenile field. Even 5000 words a week at a net average of \$4.25 per thousand words would give a writer a net income of \$21.25 a week from this source alone. Perhaps the secret of getting a fair return from juvenile writing lies as much in rapid production as in volume production. A writer producing 1000 words of juvenile material per hour could turn out his quota of 5000 words a week in 5 hours of actual production: Allow another 5

*Editor's Note: Mr. Rosenberg refers to articles in the A. & J. by Will Herman, the most recent being "The Juvenile Article," in the October, 1938, issue.

hours for research, and he will be getting, presumably, \$21.25 for 10 hours time. \$2.12 an hour is not such bad pay.

We can't all be tremendous producers like Will Herman—and it's fortunate for the editors of the juvenile publications, perhaps, that we

can't. Yet the free-lance writer may very profitably include a certain amount of juvenile production in his weekly working schedule. It will provide him with a sure if modest income while he is trying to put over his more ambitious stuff.

HANDY MARKET LIST OF GREETING-CARD MARKETS

(Firms that did not respond to the questionnaire mailed to them are omitted this year as presumably not interested in considering sentiments.)

OPEN MARKETS

The Buzza Company, Craftacres, Minneapolis, Minn. Considers sentiments from free-lances at any time. All occasions; verse, ideas, art work. Special requirements, religious cards, mottoes, cards for children. Current needs, Valentine, Easter, Everyday. Eleanor Hanson, editor. Verse, 50 cents per line.

George S. Carrington Co., 2732 Fullerton Ave., Chicago, Ill. Considers Christmas, Valentine, and Everyday sentiments during February, March, and April. Prose, verse, ideas, art work. No current needs. Frank J. Mooré, editor. 25 and 50 cents per line.

Fine Arts Greeting Card Co., 160 W. 24th St., New York. Considers sentiments from free-lances, at all seasons. Ideas, art work; novelties and cards for children. Bob Herschfield, editor. Pays market price.

Gartner and Bender, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill. Considers sentiments from free-lances. Verse, ideas. In market for Valentines, January 1; Easter, February 1; Christmas, August 1; Mother's, Father's, Graduation Day, April 1. Sentiments should try to express a wish. N. D. Modell, editor. 50 cents per line.

The Paramount Line, Inc., 109 Summer St., Providence, R. I. Considers sentiments from free-lances, at any time. Buys for all seasons and occasions except Halloween and St. Patrick's Day; verse, ideas, art work. Comics always welcome. Keeps regular contributors informed of needs; new writers should inquire. Current needs, Valentine, Easter, Everyday. Theodore Markoff, editor. 25 to 50 cents per line.

Julius Pollack & Sons, Inc., 141 E. 25th St., New York. Considers free-lance contributions. Birthday, Everyday, Christmas, New Year, Easter, Mother's Day; Valentine. Prose, verse, ideas. Current needs, Easter and Mother's Day. Miss Ethel Fisher, editor. 50 cents per line.

Jessie H. McNicol, 18 Huntington Ave., Boston, Mass. Considers sentiments at any time. Current need, Birthday and Everyday. Standard rates.

Rust Craft Publishers, Inc., 1000 Washington St., Boston, Mass. Considers seasonal material from free-lances, all types, at all times. Present need. Christmas sentiments. Mary Makepeace, editor. 50 cents per line minimum.

Geo. C. Whitney Co., 67 Union St., Worcester, Mass. Considers sentiments from free-lances at any time. Valentine and Christmas verse and ideas, also novelties, cards for children. Charles C. Clarke, editor. 50 cents per line, on acceptance.

MARKETS NOW CLOSED

Art Point Studios, Sebastopol, Calif. "Out of market at present."

The Bromfield Publishers, 12 High St., Brookline Village, Mass. Closed market.

Gibson Art Co., 233 W. Fourth St., Cincinnati, Ohio. "Employs own staff writers—not in market for free-lance contributions." Helen Steiner Rice, editor.

Hall Bros., Inc., Grand Ave. and McGee St. at 25th, Kansas City, Mo. "Not at present in the market." Mildred H. Boyd.

Susan Holton, 39 E. 20th St., New York. "I write all my own sentiments."

The Keating Co., N. E. Cor. 22nd and Market Sts., Philadelphia, Pa. Considers sentiments when

in market. Everyday and Christmas; prose and verse. Market closed for three to six months. 50 cents a line.

Norcross, 244 Madison Ave., New York. Closed market.

Pageley, 220 5th Ave., New York. Not in the market.

A. B. Plateless, 243 Canal St., New York. No sentiments considered at present. Henry M. Alvo.

Success Greeting Card Co., 315 4th Ave., New York. "Not in the market at present."

White & Wyckoff Mfg. Co., Holyoke, Mass. "Ample material on hand to take care of needs." O. Landgraf.

VERSE MARKET ADDENDA

By VIRGINIA SCOTT MINER

Corrections and additions to information published in the Handy Market List of Verse Magazines contained in our January issue, based on supplementary information since received, should be noted as follows:

Arcadian Life, Caddo Gap, Ark., O. E. Rayburn, editor, uses pastoral poems. No payment; books and subscriptions are offered as prizes.

Berkeley Poetry Magazine, 221 W. Broadway, Paterson, N. J., offers book and subscription prizes. Prizes, type unspecified, are planned by the editors of *Expression*, same address and editor.

Better Verse, Medford, Ore., has been discontinued owing to the death of the editor, Irl Morse.

Bozart-Westminster, Oglethorpe University, Ga., announces the Ernest Hartsock prizes of \$25 and \$12 for the best two poems in each issue.

La Paloma Poetry Magazine, 221 W. Broadway, Paterson, N. J., edited by James Gabelle, uses verse by members of the Pan American Poetry Society, only. May be in English, French, Spanish, or Portuguese.

Notebook, Box 5804, Cleveland, Ohio, Flozari Rockwood, editor, announces prizes, but non-members, while eligible, cannot appear in magazine oftener than once a year. It is a "newsmagazine of the creative arts and uses the work of about fifty poets an issue." Canadian editor, Dorothy Sproule, 1935 Crescent St., Montreal, Quebec.

Poetry Caravan, Rt. 1, Lakeland, Fla., Etta Josephine Murfey, editor, will offer three prizes each issue.

Poetry World, 79 Fourth Ave., New York, Henry Harrison, editor, will offer cash prizes this year of \$5, \$3, and \$2 an issue.

Silhouettes, 303 Rosewood, Ontario, Calif., should be listed at 50 cents a copy.

These and Those, 3231 Fulton Blvd., Chicago, is announced by G. Vivian Rossi, editor, to appear monthly, at 10 cents a copy, beginning the first week in March. Prizes will be awarded for best poems.

The Tramp, P. O. Box 397, Anacortas, Wash., is announced as a quarterly of high-quality verse to appear June 1. It is issued by a group of writers belonging to a WPA adult education group. An annual prize of \$25 will be awarded for best poem by a writer who has not yet published a book of verse.

Verse Craft, Emory University, Ga., in taking over *Horizons*, retained Lucia Trent and Ralph Cheyney as consulting editors. The latter are seeking suitable material for their editorial columns, "Frontier," Los Angeles; "Peace Digest," Van Nuys, Calif.; and "Unity," Chicago. For "Frontier" they want only the work of Western poets.

Visions, Alpine, Calif., % Rancho Monte Vito, Sand Dune Sage, editor, offers ten prizes each issue.

THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST'S LITERARY MARKET TIPS

GATHERED MONTHLY FROM AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES

Crime Confessions, 11 E. 44th St., New York, is announced as the tentative title of a new magazine to be issued by the publishers of *Crime Detective*. Lionel White, editor, states that the new magazine will use only first-person stories, written by criminals or persons involved in some way in current crimes. "Stories should, if possible, have a sex angle, should be dramatically written, must not glorify crime, and should be handled from a human-interest and personalized point of view. Manuscripts may be anywhere from 2000 to 6000 words, and we are interested in three and four-part serials, approximately 4000 to 5000 words each part. This is a wide open market in a new and unusual field. It is suggested that authors submit queries before definitely going ahead on stories. Foreign cases are not wanted, unless extremely unusual. By-lines from convicted criminals, especially women, are particularly desired. The stories should be written from a somewhat confessional point of view but should not be too feminine or maudlin. Rates will be approximately 1½ cents a word on acceptance, extra for photos, and higher rates will be paid for unusual material." Although the announcement does not specifically say so, it appears that "ghost-written" material will be acceptable, the interest of the magazine being in the by-line of the person involved in the crime.

Young America, 32 E. 57th St., New York, announces that it will no longer accept serial stories. Its present requirement is for short-stories of 2500 words. "Background and subject matter should be broadly educational. We suggest history, careers, science, or semi-authentic biography. No love interest, gangsters, or murders. Stories should be interesting to youth between the ages of 8 to 18 inclusive. Rates of payment, 1 cent a word, on publication. As in the past, all factual material is staff-written." Winthrop Brubaker is now editor.

10 Story Book, 538 S. Clark St., Chicago, "feeling that the sex field has been overdone and cheapened, and that the demand for truly iconoclastic stories is on the increase, is returning to its original field—a magazine for iconoclasts," writes A. J. Gontier, Jr., president of Sun Publications. "In future, *10 Story Book* will drop the sex angle and feature stories of the bizarre and outre, with a touch of extravagance, or perhaps the uncanny, but no unnecessary emphasis on sex. Stories will run from short shorts up to 5000 words. Harry Stephen Keeler continues as editor. Rates will be fair to good, and on a wordage basis, payment on acceptance."

Tolerance, 6331 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, Calif., is announced as a projected magazine which is interested in receiving fiction and articles slanted at tolerance and especially designed to break down all human failings of racial and religious nature. Material showing intolerance in foreign countries or on such subjects as war and persecution is desired. Frank L. Gordon, of the Tolerance Publishing Co., states that no rates of payment have yet been set, but that material should be submitted "subject to the publisher's purchase at the usual rate."

Young Dancer, formerly at 49 W. 45th St., New York, has been combined with *Dance*, same address.

Good Photography and *Photography Handbook*, 1501 Broadway, New York, Fawcett publications, are going on a definite bi-annual production schedule, writes Robert Hertzberg, editor. "There will be two issues of each during 1939, large 144-page books selling for 50 cents a copy. We are in the market for articles of interest to amateur photographers. These must be essentially of practical, 'how-to-do' nature and accompanied by photographic illustrations. New methods of doing old jobs, darkroom short-cuts, accessories for the camera and enlarger, simplified or improved lighting stunts, etc., are all welcome. A large section of each magazine is devoted to descriptions of home-made processing devices and gadgets of all kinds. Photographs must be sharp and clear, on glossy paper, any size between 4 by 5 and 8 by 10 inches. A small, clear print is more acceptable than a large, fuzzy one. Pictures should show action or some human element; to give size comparison a human figure, or at least human hands, should be included. In articles of the 'how-to-do' type the pictures should show methods used and results obtained. Minimum payment for short 'kinks' is \$3. We have no fixed rate for feature articles, the size of the check depending entirely on the idea behind the story, clarity of its presentation, and quality of the accompanying photographs. We pay the highest rates in the camera field, and, in accordance with the usual Fawcett policy, we pay promptly on acceptance."

Fact Detective, 480 Lexington Ave., Suite 933, New York, is a new bi-monthly magazine of the Trojan Publishing Co., edited by Gloria Grey. It uses fact detective and crime articles, and accepted material must be certified as to accuracy. Articles are not considered unless accompanied by photographs. Lengths, 500 to 20,000 words. Miss Grey promises reports within two weeks and payment at ½ cent a word and up, on acceptance.

Fact Spy, 480 Lexington Ave., Suite 933, New York, is a new Trojan bi-monthly. Gloria Grey, editor, writes: "We use fact-spy and espionage articles. Any accepted material must be certified as to accuracy. Few articles considered unless accompanied by photographs. Lengths, 500 to 20,000 words. Reports are within two weeks. Payment is at ½ cent a word and up, on acceptance."

Western Story, 79 Seventh Ave., New York, is now using longer novels than formerly. John Burr, editor, writes: "The 25,000-word length will find greater favor than the short novelettes which we have been running recently." This Street & Smith magazine pays good rates on acceptance.

Jack and Jill, 626 Ledger Bldg., Philadelphia, juvenile magazine of the Curtis Publishing Co., is edited by Ada C. Rose who considers short-stories of 1000 words, articles up to 500 words, verse, and art work. Rates paid are not reported but should be good.

Pictorial Review combined with *Delineator*, New York, long a leading women's magazine and of late years published by Hearst, will be discontinued with the March issue.

The American Scholar, Phi Beta Kappa quarterly, has moved from 145 W. 55th St. to 12 E. 44th St., New York.

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My little paper, "D'ORSAYGRAM," which I publish from time to time, contains some 60,000 words of articles on writing, selling, plotting, etc. Copies of the last issue (November) still available, and sent gratis on request.

LAURENCE R. D'ORSAY

102 Beaudette Bldg. Beverly Hills, Calif.

Strange Stories, 22 W. 48th St., New York, newest member of the Thrilling group, is in immediate need of material. Leo Margulies, editorial director, writes: "*Strange Stories* uses in each issue a wide variety of short-stories and novelets, from one to ten thousand words in length. Stories must feature a strong uncanny atmosphere so, naturally, themes should emphasize the weird, supernatural and bizarre. It is a magazine without taboos! There is room for almost every type of weird fiction in its pages—as long as certain essential requisites are kept in mind. Stories aimed at this market are obviously fantastic by definition. It is the writer's ability in making the incredible sound credible that determines the salability of his tale. In other words, the weird yarn should be developed so that the atmosphere of plausibility is as dominant as its other elements. We want the reader to feel that maybe the story *did* happen—that the accounts of witchery, black magic, ghosts, etc., are not merely melodramatic drapings—but differ from reality only in their relatively strange unfamiliarity. Glib writing, the casual acceptance of supernatural agencies, mumbo-jeremonies, etc., are poor methods of establishing a convincing atmosphere in your story. The backbone of credibility must be superimposed into the tale solidly, judiciously, and naturally. So, if your story is told convincingly, you've opened the most important sesame to *Strange Stories*. Strong suspense is another desirable feature, the employment of which device will go a long way toward promoting a story's success. The inclusion of good complications in the tale is an advisable method of generating suspense. There is no reason why the weird yarn should be fragile in plot, as many writers seem to think. The story should have a meaty structure, be well rounded with dramatic situations and interesting motivations. The punch ending is always welcome. It is difficult to regiment the *do's* and *don'ts* in connection with this field. Perusal of a current issue will do a lot toward conveying the flavor of the stuff we're after. But there are a few elementary tips that might be given some thought. (1) Avoid the stereotyped plot. All varieties of overworked themes are easily recognizable, and we'll bounce 'em back—fast! Of course, damned good writing will carry an old idea . . . but it's safer to try greener pastures. (2) Steer away from the banal in subordinate situations. The reader gets fed up reading stories in which the hero uses a cross to scare away evil forces. Or a silver bullet to kill the werewolf. Or a stake driven through a vampire's heart. You know the rest of these bromidic situations—keep away from them. (3) Our favorite type of story. Here's a dollars-and-cents tip. The type of yarn that will always go over with us is the interesting weird tale in which a possible explanation for the various supernatural phenomena is suggested—but a fragment of doubt remains in the reader's mind. In this sort of story the reader is confronted with the alternative of accepting the yarn at face value or accrediting it with a natural explanation. Ambrose Bierce's classic short, "The Damned Thing," is a perfect example of what we mean. (4) Historical weird fiction. We'll take historical weird yarns, but first a word of warning. Stories of that variety should concern themselves with truly weird incidents of that period, not merely with some of the superstitions and beliefs of the era. The background, naturally, if historically accurate, would abound with more superstitions and be more readily fertile for weird incidents. But the treatments must not be casual, must raise the hairs on the reader's neck as much as a story of modern days. . . Woman interest is desirable, but not strictly essential. And handle it discreetly. For the moment our rate of payment is a half a cent a word on acceptance, with fast checks."

Homes of the West, 546 Market St., San Francisco, has been discontinued.

Welcome News, "A Journal of the New Day," 404 W. Ninth Street, Los Angeles, Calif., published monthly at 10c per issue, is a magazine of leftist trend, allied to the EPIC (End Poverty in California) movement. It is in the market for articles of from 800 to 1800 words on the outdoors, hobbies, social or political topics, co-operatives. Short shorts from 300 to 400 words in length, and short-stories of 1000 to 1500 words are desired. Stories must have a social significance. Verse up to fifteen lines, a limited number of odd facts, and general material with social meaning are wanted. Photographs are used only in connection with articles, and no cartoons are desired. T. G. Mauritzen, editor, writes: "While we publish a great deal of matter of a hobby and outdoor sports interest, the magazine is devoted to the propagation of the cooperative idea, and we like the majority of the articles to have at least some social significance. We publish a few special editions during the year, our January number being a special desert number, and our July issue was our regular High Sierra outdoor number. As to our rates of payment, we like to adjust that with the individual contributors on the basis of our consideration of the worth of their efforts, so it would be almost impossible to state a definite amount or rate of payment."

Photoplay, Macfadden motion-picture magazine, should now be addressed at Chanin Bldg., New York, instead of at Hollywood, and is edited by Ernest V. Heyn.

True Mystic Science is now located at 402 Corn Exchange Bldg., Minneapolis, Minn.

Everybody's Digest, Emaus, Pa., welcomes the submission of manuscripts, dealing with overcoming handicaps, forming good habits, etc., but payment is made only in books.

Personal Romances and *Modern Movies*, formerly at 18 E. 48th St., New York, of the Ideal Publishing Company, are now located at 122 E. 42nd St.

Peek, formerly at 18 E. 48th St., New York, published every other month and devoted to humorous pictures, is now located at 122 E. 42nd St., New York. Adrian Lopez is editor.

Sex Guide, 67 W. 44th St., New York, bi-monthly issued by the Astro Distributing Corp., pays 1/2 cent per word on publication for informative and scientific articles on sex and life conduct.

44 *Western*, 205 E. 42nd St., New York, of the Popular Publications group, now lists David Manners as editor, replacing Mike Tildon.

The D. M. Publishing Co., Dover, Del., is out of business. Its magazines were *Spicy Stories*, *Pep Stories*, *Gay Broadway*, *Gay Parisienne*, *Tattle Tales*, *La Paree Stories*, and *Bedtime Stories*, all in the sex category.

National Sportsman, 275 Newbury St., Boston, should be listed as paying 1 1/2 cents a word on publication, rather than on acceptance.

Collegiate Digest, formerly at 420 Sexton Bldg., is now located at 323 Fawkes Bldg., Minneapolis, Minn.

The Golden Door, Yellow Springs, Ohio, is announced under editorship of Walter Kahoe. It will republish pieces by famous authors, hence does not offer a market.

The Southern Sportsman, P. O. Box 16, Austin, Tex., uses articles and stories from 1000 to 3500 words, and shorts of all lengths, writes J. Austin Small, editor, but at present can pay only with subscriptions. He states that it will definitely be a paying market in the not too distant future. It pays \$5 for clear, glossy prints of interesting phases of Southern outdoor sports usable for cover designs.

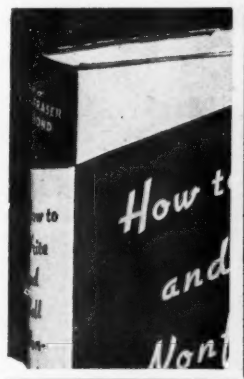
4-H *Horizons*, Wellesley, Mass., is a new magazine published for members of 4-H clubs.

\$3.50 and a Check from Adventure

Adventure for February lists a story by one of my clients. Reading it carefully, I could find not a single important change. My editing and revision of this manuscript, originally in pencil, was okayed by a staff of our most talented editors. I received \$3.50 for my work on this story—\$3.50 for a check from Adventure. . . Send me a story for sales and treatment consideration at \$1.00, or write for my folder, explaining my training plans.

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THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST CRITICISM SERVICE will help you, as it has helped others. See back cover page for details.

Everyday Photography, 67 W. 44th St., New York, now a member of the Ace Magazines group, "seeks articles slanted to help the amateur photographer," writes Thomas A. Blanchard, editor. "All stories must include good photographs. Exposure data must accompany photos." Payment is made before publication at around 3 cents a word, depending upon value of article rather than length; photos, \$3 and up.

Popular Romances, 22 W. 48th St., New York, is a new member of the Thrilling group, Leo Margulies, editorial director. It uses dramatic, sensational first-person love stories, 1000 to 10,000 words in length, paying ½ cent a word on acceptance.

The American Mercury should now be addressed at 570 Lexington Ave., New York, instead of Ridgefield, Conn., and Eugene Lyons has succeeded Paul Palmer as editor.

Parade of Youth, 1727 K St., N. W., Washington, D. C., is now overstocked and not in the market for any material, writes William Kroger of the staff. Jay Jerome Williams is now listed as editor of this service.

Radio Feature Service, 420 Madison Ave., New York, held a batch of material more than a year, paying no attention to inquiries, before returning it, according to a contributor.

Bar D Press, Siloam Springs, Ark., is interested in seeing short manuscripts of Southwestern interest, and will publish them in booklet form on a royalty basis or some other mutually agreeable plan, writes J. B. Davis, proprietor.

Wallace Heberd, Publisher, 3 W. Carrillo St., Santa Barbara, Calif., writes that for the current year he is in search of twelve book-length manuscripts of universal interest—biography, fiction, science, religion, poetry, juveniles, and stories of travel—for publication on the usual royalty basis.

Grossett & Dunlap, book publishers, will move during the next few weeks from 1140 Broadway to 1107 Broadway, New York.

The Board of Education of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, 1724 Chouteau Ave., St. Louis, Mo., is overstocked with all types of material for its young people's magazines, *Treasure*, *Friends*, *Venture*, and *Youth*.

The Home Friend, formerly at Kansas City, Mo., now published at 549 W. Randolph St., Chicago, is now edited by F. J. Cummings, who writes that it is not buying any material.

Down Beat, 608 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, sends the following revised statement of requirements: Technical matter slanted toward professional musicians, feature stories not to exceed 2000 words, news flashes, new ideas, cartoons and photos of well-known musicians and band leaders (candid especially) all on the subject of modern dance music and dance bands. Carl Cons is managing editor, Dave Dexter, associate. Payment, ½ cent minimum, on publication.

Up Beat, 608 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, companion to *Down Beat*, is slanted toward amateur musicians. It uses technical matter, articles of 1200 words or less, feature material of music activity in schools, colleges, business houses, and churches. Semi-classic and symphonic music is featured more than popular dance music. Pictures and cartoons used. Carl Cons is managing editor; George Overson, associate. Payment, ½ cent minimum, on publication.

Office Life Magazine, 247 Park Ave., New York, writes that plans for publication have been deferred until fall, and that additionally, Miss Elaine Warren Martin, fiction editor, has been seriously ill, so that at the moment there is no editorial staff to read contributions.

The Octopus, 205 E. 42nd St., New York, is a new Popular Publications magazine, featuring a lead novel on assignment and short-stories of mystery and adventure. Rates paid by this company are usually about 1 cent a word, on acceptance.

Paragon Features Syndicate, 7428 W. 61st Place, Argo, Ill., was incorrectly reported as discontinued in our December issue. A note from Julian S. Krupa, managing editor, assures us that the syndicate is actively in business.

Lex Publications, 381 Fourth Ave., New York, formerly Ultem Publications, publishers of *Silk Stocking Stories*, *High Heel*, *Movie Humor*, and *Psychology Magazine*, are not paying for currently published material, according to reports reaching us. One author, whom the company owes for long-published material, suggests that others in the same boat report their experiences to J. J. Doran, inspector in charge, Post Office Dept., New York, N. Y., who already has some reports on the company.

Associated Photofeatures Syndicate, 48 Charles St., Boston, Mass., is very slow in reporting on submitted material and pays no attention to letters of inquiry, according to the experience of a contributor.

Henry Holt & Co., 257 Fourth Ave., New York, informs an inquirer that it is no longer publisher for the Julia Ellsworth Ford Foundation.

Conde Nast Publications, Inc., 420 Lexington Ave., New York, are preparing to launch a new motion-picture magazine featuring Hollywood as the fashion center of America. The name will be announced later. Alice Thompson has been appointed editor.

Outdoors Magazine is announced as a new outdoor magazine to appear with a February issue from the offices of the Open Road Publishing Co., 729 Boylston St., Boston. The latter company issues *Open Road for Boys*, edited by Clayton H. Ernst, who will also be president of Outdoor Publications, Inc., under which banner the new magazine will appear.

Science Fiction, 60 Hudson St., New York, is a new bi-monthly of the Double-Action group, devoted to fantastic stories of the future. Ten short-stories an issue are used. Rates presumably are 1/2 cent a word and up, on publication.

Good Housekeeping, 57th St. at Eighth Ave., New York, writes that W. F. Bigelow should still be listed as editor. Herbert R. Mayes has been reported as editor in several quarters and this title was given to him in a recent telephone call to *Good Housekeeping* offices.

The address of The Stet Company was erroneously published in our January issue as 1445 E. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, when it should have been 1445 W. Jackson Blvd. The company announced a new magazine seeking short-stories, articles, and poems.

Club Women's Digest, 401 Berger Bldg., Pittsburgh, Pa., issued by Powell Publications and edited by Mary S. Powell, uses features of interest to women, including short-stories and articles of 1000 to 1500 words. Payment is announced at 1/2 cent a word and up, on acceptance.

The American Way, 1501 E. Douglas Ave., Wichita, Kans., is changing its format and expects to discontinue using practically all material except that produced by its own staff, writes H. R. Loudermilk, editor.

Authenticated News Service, P. O. Box 326, Hollywood, Calif., states that it will consider features, not stories, from independent writers, also spot news photographs and those that can be converted into features. "Those who wish to submit material to us must first register and obtain official press credentials," writes Vance Chandler, editor.

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Jane Hardy was formerly on the editorial staff of Macmillan Company. She is highly recommended by Harold S. Latham, Ida Tarbell, Henry Goddard Leach, Hamlin Garland, and others.

Send for circular, and for letters of recommendation from George Horace Lorimer, H. L. Mencken, John Farrar, William C. Lengel, H. E. Maule, William Allen White, Marie M. Meloney, H. C. Paxton, Fulton Oursler, Thayer Hobson, Marjory Stoneman Douglas and others.

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Criticism Editing Advice
Del Mar, Calif.

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PRIZE CONTESTS

City of Destiny, 614 Bernice Bldg., Takoma, Wash., is a new quarterly edited by Zella Newcomb, using short-stories up to 3000 words, poetry, and photographs. No payment is offered at present.

The National Jewish Monthly, formerly *B'nai B'rith Magazine* at Cincinnati, Ohio, is now located at 1003 K St. N.W., Washington, D. C.

Adventure Trails, *Top Notch Western*, *Star Sports Magazine*, and *Modern Love*, of the Red Circle group, RKO Bldg., New York, have been discontinued.

Adventure Novels and *Short Stories* is the present title of the former *Adventure Novels*, of the Double-Action group, 60 Hudson St., New York.

Intimate Romances, *Western Love Story*, and *Cowboy Romances* have been discontinued by the Double-Action group, 60 Hudson St., New York.

Leisure, 683 Atlantic Ave., Boston, has been taken over by *Yankee*, Dublin, N. H., and the latter has added a leisure department to take its place.

All America Sports Magazine, New York, has been discontinued.

Better Understanding, formerly at Ventura, Calif., should now be addressed at P. O. Box 87, Riverside, Calif.

Weird Tales, 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, now uses serials up to 60,000 words, informs Farnsworth Wright, editor.

Two to Teens, 401 Berger Bldg., Pittsburgh, Pa., has been discontinued by Powell Publications.

Current Ideas, 540 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, is reported by the post office "Moved, left no address."

American Motorist, Washington, D. C., asks to be not listed as in the market for material.

The American Family, Mt. Vernon, N. Y., is out of business.

The Hobby Horse, 255 W. 92nd St., New York, is reported to have been discontinued.

Western Trailer Trails, 830 Market Street, San Francisco, Calif., has ceased publication.

The proposed weird pulp magazine of the Ziff-Davis Company, Chicago, has been shelved for the present.

The Three Americas, 381 Fourth Ave., has appeared under the editorship of Virginia Creed. The new monthly will seek to promote friendly inter-American relations.

Commercial Car Journal, Chestnut and 56th Sts., Philadelphia, announces a contest for fleet employees. The subject is "How Our Shop Reduced Fleet Operating Costs." The contest opened January 1, 1939, and will end May 15, 1939. Articles must show how maintenance costs or operating costs were reduced through shop practice, with proof of reduction. The individual who submits the article must be employed by the fleet (considered any operation with eight or more trucks, including trucks used as tractors, located in the United States). Although checks for prize-winning articles will be made out to the employee submitting the article, competent writers may make whatever arrangements they can with fleet employees for the writing of contest material. The grand prize is an all-expense trip to the New York World's Fair or the San Francisco Golden Gate International Exposition, not to exceed \$200, or \$250 in cash, for the best article submitted. Four prizes of \$50 each will be awarded, one in each of four classifications, from fleets operating eight to 25 trucks, to fleets operating from 101 trucks up. Articles not chosen for prizewinners may be accepted by the editor for publication at regular space rates. They will be returned only if accompanied by return postage. For further information, write George T. Hook, editor.

The Woman's Home Companion, 250 Park Ave., New York, offers a first prize of \$50, second of \$25, and additional prizes of \$10 each for letters dealing with the subject: "How *The Companion's* Consumer Relations Pamphlets have helped me to be a better buyer." Contestants are advised to send a 3-cent stamp to *The Companion* for the ten pamphlets, before writing letters. Letters must not exceed 300 words in length, must be typewritten or plainly written with pen and ink, must be folded, not rolled, signed with name and address of sender, and mailed on or before March 1, 1939, to Consumer Contest Editor.

The Atlantic Monthly, 8 Arlington Street, Boston, announces that it will award, to high school and private school students, \$25 for the best story; \$25 for the best essay, and \$25 for the best poem. The contests are open only to students enrolled on the Atlantic College List as using *The Atlantic Monthly* in a course during some part of the 1938-1939 college year.

TRADE JOURNAL DEPARTMENT

Edited by JOHN T. BARTLETT

The Feed Bag, 741 N. Milwaukee St., Milwaukee, Wis., closed the year with a thorough cleaning of its 1938 editorial file. Emil J. Blacky, associate editor, reports that the publication's editorial policy is being changed considerably for 1939. He says, "Please keep us in mind whenever you have anything unusual in the way of merchandising, and henceforth please limit articles to about 800 words."

Furniture South, High Point, N. C., is working out a policy of editorial expansion, and from now on will be receptive to articles submitted from outside its own staff. Payment of 1/2 cent a word on acceptance, with decision within 30 days—editorial privileges reserved to modify articles in accordance with the editor's formula of story presentation, unless author specifies otherwise—is offered for articles of from 500 to 1500 words on topics of interest to retail furniture store managers, buyers, salesmen; unique, effective displays of stock; astute inventory policies, short cut and efficient accounting methods, selling methods, sales psychology, special promotion plans, suggestion selling, handling customers, meeting the return goods problem, store training plans and activities, and such other topics as might be interestingly presented with helpfulness to the reader. Some meritorious instalment articles of from 15,000 to 20,000 words will be considered. N. T. Praigg is editorial director.

Lubrication & Maintenance & Petroleum Marketer, South Michigan Ave., Chicago, has changed its name to *Petroleum Marketer*. Brandon E. Rourke, editor, announces that the publication is still entirely staff-written.

Shoe Repair Service, formerly at 702 Commercial Bldg., St. Louis, Mo., is now located at 816-820 Mart Bldg. Walter J. Eggers has replaced A. V. Fingulin as editor. Payment of 1/2 cent a word is made on publication for trade articles, business ideas, featured articles on high-grade shoe repair. Cartoons and pictures are also used.

White Collar, formerly at Plainfield, N. J., is now located at 230 Fifth Ave., New York. Russell A. Dorsey, editor, informs that \$1 to \$2.50 is still being paid for how-to-do fact articles and handikinks used by experienced office people.

Sports Age has moved from 977 Merchandise Mart, Chicago, to 260 5th Ave., New York. Ames A. Castle announces this his editorial schedule is filled.

Meat Merchandiser, 105 Ninth St., St. Louis, Mo., wants a complete list of correspondents in every hamlet, by-way, town and city in the country, writes Frank J. Maher. "The only way such correspondent can get on our list is by putting his name and address in the center of a 3x5 card and mailing it to us. No other correspondence needed."

Confectionery & Ice Cream World, 99 Hudson St., New York, recently advised a correspondent, "Please remove our name from your list, as our needs are adequately taken care of by our regular staff of correspondents."

Telegraph Delivery Spirit, H. W. Hellman Bldg., Los Angeles, is now practically all staff written, with two notable exceptions—a short short-story of 850-900 words dealing with the florist's business or "flowers-by-wire," or some closely related theme, and one article monthly written in an authoritative manner for the department "Helpful Ideas for your Business," 900-950 words. Rate is 1/2 cent on publication, according to F. Chandler Harris, assistant editor.

Industrial Medicine, 540 North Michigan, Chicago, wishes to be listed as a journal of occupational diseases, and traumatic surgery. Editor is A. G. Park.

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This series began in the September, 1938, issue. Back copies available.

VI—"SNOWBALLING" A PLOT

As a general review of the principles of plot-building laid down in the first five lessons of this series, it seems appropriate at this point to republish the article, "Snowballing" a Plot," written by Willard E. Hawkins, editor of *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST*, and originally published back in 1916 by its predecessor, *The Student Writer*. Many requests for the republication of this article have been made. This seems an appropriate place to honor them.

BY the term "snowballing" a plot, we do not mean throwing things at it. No doubt, many plots need such drastic treatment, but in this case the phrase has been coined to suggest the process of rolling up ideas as a huge snowball is rolled, by turning the nucleus over and over, with an added accumulation at each revolution.

Practically all successful authors turn their ideas over and over in order to perfect them. For the majority, the most satisfactory method is to select a theme, then devise characters and incidents to illuminate it. Generally speaking, the wrong way to go about fiction building is to look for actual incidents upon which to hang stories. The advice, "study the newspapers for plot suggestions," is responsible for two-thirds of the commonplace, mediocre stories with which the editors are bombarded. Read the newspapers—yes; be alert to what is going on; in every possible way keep your ears attuned to life and human nature. But employ the insight thus gained to make your purely imaginary incidents convincing.

The only way in which, as a rule, an actual incident may be effectively employed in plot manufacture is to extract the principle that it illustrates, and then employ it as the theme of a purely imaginary story.

Let us, by way of illustration, reproduce the mental process of "snowballing" a plot. A calm, confident, unhurried attitude of mind is of great importance. The idea, once found, must be allowed to grow naturally and of its own accord, with the aid of the subconscious mind, into a symmetrical story. Our part is to keep turning it over and over, so that an accumulation of ideas may have a chance to adhere to the basic conception.

The first essential, of course, is the idea. And, remembering that actual incidents are likely to make commonplace material, instead of culling over the newspapers or searching through our notebooks, we will look within ourselves for some thought of sufficient importance to be worthy of impressing on readers through the medium of fiction.

This basic idea, or theme, may be almost any abstract principle, ideal, or bit of philosophy. "When Fortune flatters, she does it to betray," wrote Publius Syrus. This suggests the story of an unworthy man whose nature is betrayed by the use he makes of his money. "Mother love" is an abstract idea capable of illustration in many striking ways. "Intuition is more

trustworthy than reason"—if you think so, prove your point by endowing a certain character with intuition, another with reason, and turning the conception over until it evolves into a plot.

A hundred such themes present themselves; they contain possibilities, but not all of them appeal to us as being our particular story—the one we wish to develop.

Let's see—suppose we develop a story on the subject of "heredity." That, however, has been used a good many times in fiction, so the chances are that we would be wasting our effort upon it. We try again. For a good, live subject, how does the word "preparedness" sound? Not so bad, as we consider it. Rightly handled, that word may serve as the nucleus for our snowball. Here it is, then, a tiny, compact ball of possibilities:

Preparedness.

Now for the initial turn-over. The first thing we notice is that this word has two poles. We shall have to take a definite stand—our story must prove something. Are we for, or against?

It may happen that we are neutral; but just to get started, we decide to make our story prove the "anti" side. The first roll of our snowball, thus evolves into this form:

The best protection is non-preparedness.

Second turn. Questions now begin to arise. What characters shall we select? In what setting shall we place the story? Shall we involve two European countries, or perhaps the United States and some other nation? Not if we are wise. That will take the subject entirely out of our reach—and anyway, this situation is what suggested our theme. The farther we get away from it, the more likely we shall be to maintain a clear perspective.

Short-story unity of impression depends largely upon limiting the cast to the fewest possible characters. Our situation must be one involving not more than two or three persons. And the reader's interest must be centered, in particular, upon a certain one of these characters.

Let us take stock of our idea and its present accumulation:

The theme that the best policy is unpreparedness is to be illustrated by a small cast centering around one character. This character is to pursue the policy of unpreparedness and to win out by it in a situation that ordinarily would be met with armed resistance.

Third turn. This does not as yet look like a story; still, it is quite an elaboration upon our original snowball. At least, we know what general types of situations and characters are needed.

Now, it will be a good plan to consider several tentative settings and situations:

Suppose we place the scene in society. A number of debutantes may be arming themselves with feminine weapons of conquest, the object being prepared-

ness for the attack when a titled foreigner comes wife hunting. Surely there is a story in the capture of this lion by a simple little maiden who has been too artless (or artful, as the case may be) to prepare for conquest.

But that does not altogether suit us; some better use of the material may suggest itself. Suppose we transpose the gender and shift the scene from society to frontier. Surely, if preparedness is capable of standing the test, it will have good opportunity of doing so in a typical mining camp, where every man carries a gun and is prepared to use it at an instant's notice. Among all these hair-trigger natures, an advocate of peace who refuses to decorate his person with hardware, may be a unique personality. We might have him confronted by armed bandits while carrying a fortune in gold down an unfrequented trail. It seems not impossible to devise a situation in which his lack of armament saves his life and enables him to retain the gold.

Or, we might transpose the scene to the University. Picture the "grind" who is studying night and day in preparation for life, while his frivolous roommate, who does not believe in preparedness, has a good time. According to the fable of the Grasshopper and the Ants, the grind is due to come out on top; but it will not be difficult for us to write a story in which the roommate, who devoted less time to preparation, stumbles into the fat, responsible position, while the grind becomes one of his clerks.

But that is hackneyed. We dismiss the idea for the present.

We might lay the scene on the border of Mexico, letting an unprotected American save himself and his family by means of a striking policy of disarmament. Or we might—

But, after all, the mining camp suggestion contains good possibilities for a vital illustration of our theme. We may tentatively decide upon it and proceed with our rolling process. This is how we now stand:

That unpreparedness is the best protection is to be proved in a gold-camp setting, by a hero who refuses to avoid preparedness. While burdened with treasure, he is confronted by bandits. The situation is such that, if he had been armed, he would have been killed. As a direct result of being unarmed, he escapes both with his life and his treasure.

Fourth turn. That phrase, "As a direct result of being unarmed," is important. The story must satisfy this condition. If there is no clear connecting link between our hero's escape and his lack of arms, our anti-preparedness demonstration will fall flat.

We know now that our hero is going to get the best of the highwaymen through being unarmed; but the details are still to come. However, the preliminary situation is not difficult to imagine. It has, so to speak, adhered to our nucleus without any particular effort on our part. We begin to visualize the situation. There must be a central character, the advocate of non-preparedness. And his presence seems to call for a contrast with some more warlike character who is violently in favor of "gun toting." It is easy to imagine these two as partners, riding along with the treasure between them—arguing the question of its safe transport. The hero advocates leaving all weapons at home. His partner has insisted upon stocking up with artillery. They arrive at a dangerous pass, where their theories are put to the test. Opposed by a superior force, their fight seems certain to be a losing one. So we have an opportunity to compare the tactics in actual practice.

This has been quite a turn-over. Let us pause and warm our hands, while surveying the present state of our snowball.

Steve Anti, and his partner, Scotty Pro, are wending their way to town, heavily laden with gold dust from their rich placer in the hills. Buck McGinnis and his band of outlaws are known to be at large in the neighborhood. Buck openly flaunts a trophy consisting of a huge diamond plucked from the necktie of a capitalist tenderfoot. Steve Anti laments the display of hardware he has been persuaded to hang around his belt, protesting that it simply invites attack. Scotty has never heard such foolishness! How are they going to protect their gold without fighting? The argument waxes warm, but remains unsettled, when they approach Dead Man's Gulch, where the outlaws are known to lie in wait. Unable to agree as to a mode of procedure, the two decide to part company. The gold is divided and distributed inconspicuously about the person of each man. Then Steve passes his rifle, his revolver, and his ammunition, over to Scotty, whose warlike nature revels in being thus doubly armed. They draw lots. The winner is to take the lead, the other to follow fifteen minutes behind him. Neither, under any circumstances, is to jeopardize his share of the gold by coming to the other's assistance in case of trouble.

Our snowball is now growing cumbersome. Already we have the scene, the characters, and a stage all set for the climax. The nature of that climax is in mind, but we are hazy about details. The best plan, since our characters seem to have come to life so readily, and to be displaying such marked individuality, is to follow them. Maybe the author will learn something from his creations. Already we have commenced to have a lot of respect for Steve Anti. He seems such an original thinker—and look at the risk he is taking, just for the sake of an ideal. We suspect that he will prove thrillingly audacious in a pinch. He has the eyes of a dreamer combined with the firm chin of action; and something about his mouth suggests a keen sense of humor. As for Scotty—well, though he wasn't thought of in time for the leading role, still we can't help a sneaking sympathy for the man. One look at his bristling red hair is enough to tell us that he is spoiling for a fight. Knowing our climax in advance, of course we realize that Scotty hasn't a chance at the show-down, and we almost feel sorry for him. If Scotty knew this, he would scornfully tell us to save our pity for the outlaws.

Time's up. Now for another look at our snowball.

The toss-up results in giving Steve Anti the first chance to find out the truth regarding a hereafter. Stripped of all defensive weapons, he rides forth; even his coat has been abandoned, in order that his absolute unpreparedness may be apparent at a glance. A solidly filled belt of gold is the only object surrounding his waist. He rides through the pass and is not in any way molested. His psychology begins to look reasonable. Why should bandits attack a man who obviously has nothing about him worth carrying a weapon to defend? So be—

But this fraction of a turn makes us realize that the climax of our story is going to be without dramatic action. We are proving our point in altogether too peaceful and uneventful a way. It will never do to disappoint the reader, who has been led to think there will be a real encounter with bandits. We now must contrive to bring them on the scene. Amended, our outline therefore reads:

Steve rides through the pass but a short distance, when he is suddenly confronted by half a dozen armed bandits. He recognizes the dreaded Buck McGinnis by the famous diamond flashing from his shirt front. "Stop and give an account of yourself!" is the terrible command. Steve obeys, though he regrets that those who make the request belong to the dark ages of preparedness. "Seen anything of a sorrel

horse?" inquires Steve nonchalantly, rolling a cigarette.

There being no show of resistance, the highwaymen are not quite sure it is worth their while to parley with this stranger. Steve dismounts. "Where you going?" demands McGinnis. "Thought I'd take a look down this gully," responds Steve, as he starts off. The bandits glance at one another. "Come back," yells McGinnis. "Your sorrel ain't down there. Jump on your nag and hurry—get to blazes out o' here!" So Steve, apparently against his will, is not only passed up by the gang as unworthy of their prowess, but even assisted on his way. They don't want him around.

A short distance down the road, he draws rein, listening tensely. There it comes! A sudden rattle of shots. He knows that Scotty is putting up a good fight, but the odds against him make the result a foregone conclusion. Steve, forgetful of the compact, spurs his horse to the aid of his unfortunate partner. But the shots suddenly cease—it is all over. Sadly, Steve resumes his homeward journey. How foolish to make an arsenal of oneself, thus inviting destruction!

Arriving at his destination, he enters a thirst emporium and breaks the news. It is sad news, for Scotty was well liked by these rough miners and frontiersmen. "Poor Scotty," murmurs many a voice, as our story comes to a close. "He was a mighty fine little cuss—but too all-fired 'prepared' for a scrap to get along well in this world."

So there we have the final roll of the snowball. It can be given much further polishing, and the actual narration is still to be accomplished; but our nucleus has truly developed into a definitely rounded story. The point has been clearly illustrated—But wait a minute! Wait—a—minute!

Our snowball has taken another complete flop, before we could prevent. Who walks into the thirst emporium, and into the story again, but the late lamented Scotty! We stare with eyes as wide as any frontiersman present, including Steve—but if that isn't Scotty, staggering in the door under two rifles and a wagon load of belts and ammunition, it certainly is his earth-bound spirit. That he isn't an apparition quickly becomes apparent.

"Gimme whiskey and make it straight!" he roars, in approved Western style. "I'm dying o' thirst." He glares around balefully, until his eyes light on the open-mouthed Steve. "Why the Sam Hill didn't you come back and give me a lift with all this junk?" he demands. "Whadda you think I am—a pack mule?"

So saying, he disburdens himself of half a dozen well-filled money belts, enough revolvers to supply the whole camp, and last, but not least, Buck McGinnis's much-flouted diamond. "Run out, some o' you scum," he barks, setting down the emptied glass, and see if the batch o' hosses I corralled on the way down is tied fast to the hitching bar. I had too big a thirst to make sure."

It is a shame; Scotty ought not to have done it; but he was a trouble-maker from the first. Remember how he broke into the cast when he wasn't even considered in the original line-up, and how he made us have a sort of sneaking liking for him in spite of his taking the wrong side of the argument? Now, at the last, he comes bursting in to take away all the hero's laurels. He's a rank usurper.

But it is to be feared we'll have to leave him in, because the one unpardonable sin in plot making is to let your story come out exactly as it seems destined to. Prove your point, yes; but also watch your opportunity to introduce some twist at the conclusion which gives the whole subject an altered complexion.

This, in brief, is a working illustration of "snowballing" a plot. Let a day or so elapse for each turning over, if desired. Give the subconscious mind a

chance to work with the material. Then, in the evening, write down just as much or as little as has accumulated around the idea since the last time it was reduced to paper. We couldn't have jumped at once from the nucleus idea to the final story, "A Matter of Preparedness." So we put down what we knew of the story, then turned it over until something more came to mind, and kept up the process until a moment was reached when the idea came to life and we were startled to find that our abstract thought had grown into a full-fledged story outline, complete even to the surprise twist at the conclusion.

As to the story outline here "snowballed" into shape: The question may arise: What becomes of our theme when we give it the twist? The story does not prove the theme with which we began, nor does it prove the opposite. True, but the purpose of the illustration was not so much to prove the point as to evolve a story. The theme provided a starting point. Whatever value the illustration may possess is due to the fact that we started with an open mind, our one purpose being to evolve a story—to show a plot in process of creation. Toward the last came the suggestion—"There's a chance for surprise in letting Scotty unexpectedly win out." Presto! the original theme was abandoned. It had served its purpose. Will any reader deny that the original ending seems flat and obvious—that the twist is what makes the story? If our purpose is to write as good a yarn as possible, the twist will have to remain. Our theme is of value from a story standpoint only as long as it proves a help, not a handicap.

PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

1. How does the plot outlined in this lesson square with or illustrate principles brought out thus far in the present series? For example:

a (Lesson I. The Short-Story Formula.) Does it involve a clear problem and solution? State what they are.

b (Lesson II. Climax and Complications.) Define the climax of the story and mention some of the complications as a result of which the problem was rendered more effective.

c (Lesson III. Drama and Surprise.) Does the story achieve drama, and if so, how? Does the surprise element contribute to its effectiveness? Would it be as satisfying a story if we omitted the surprise?

d (Lesson IV. From Idea to Plot.) Do we have here a good illustration of the method of developing a plot germ into completed plot?

e. (Lesson V. Inspiration and the Subconscious Mind.) How does the principle involved in "Snowballing" a Plot" fit in with the theory of the subconscious mind as an aid to plotting?

2. Name several abstract ideas which would make good starting points for the development of stories.

3. Suggest a number of settings in which the principles involved in one or more of these themes could be illustrated.

4. From among these suggestions, select one that especially appeals, and turn it over and over in the mind (with intervals between each turn) until a plot outline emerges.

5. When the outline has been completed, does it seem to constitute satisfying story? Is there some additional twist or surprise which could be added to improve it?

6. Write a story developed by "snowballing" an idea from plot germ or basic theme to completed outline.

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